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Ideas for Motivating Staff

How Do You Learn? A Questionnaire to Determine Learning Style

Assessing Staff Training Checklist

SMALL HANDS

Information Exchange for Navy Child Development Programs

We wish you a Happy and Peaceful New Year! You touch the lives of many parents and children throughout each year and you should be proud to know you make a difference!

2001 was a busy year! The MEO Validation Team finished approving all 23 MEOs! Now each of us must be stewards of our MEO and insure successful implementation! We must maintain the high quality of our programs and focus on expanding CDH. Subsidies and incentives are helping, but we must continue to market the benefits of the CDH program to commanders, parents and prospective providers.

A key challenge is to retain certified CDH providers. Now more than ever, with all the money we are investing in each provider, CDH Directors must make an effort to retain certified providers when they PCS to another Navy installation or region. CDH staff must ensure a smooth transition and take extra steps to convince the provider to stay in the program. We have already provided a simplified paper process so the CDH Director just has to copy the Standard CDH Provider Certification Record and Navy CDH Training Record and forward it (FAX or E-mail) to the next command. A letter of reference is also a nice touch! Then call the receiving CDH office and tell them when the provider is arriving, where she is staying, etc. The CDH staff can then match her with a "mentor" or "buddy" provider who can e-mail the PCSing provider or even call her from your office to set up arrangements for her arrival. The CDH staff can develop a "welcome basket", invite her to the CDH office, tour the Lending Library, and give her your SOP including local subsidies and incentives. The mentor can show her around community and some other providers and make her feel that your CDH program is the "Best" career choice!

Also keep track of those providers who are waiting for housing or who "want to wait until they get settled" in their off-base home. Have the buddy provider call them each week and invite them to CDH training and events even if they aren't ready to begin work. If you have other ideas for retaining PCSing providers, let us know so we can post them on the web-site for everyone to see!

Dr. Gwen Boyd

CHANGES

There have been several changes to the Community Support Branch staff since our last Small Hands. **Dr. Gwen Boyd** took over as **Head, Child Development Section**. **Sharon Peterson** is our new **Head, Community Support Branch**. Our new Inspectors are **Bette Colter**, who joined our branch in March 2001 and **Betsy Coffey** on New Year's Day 2002. Please join us in welcoming our newest staff members!

The Art of Building (and Re-Building) Staff Unity

by Karen Stephens, Director, Illinois State University Child Care Center

Staff Turnover Affects Continuing Staff

For everyone, staff turnover can be very intimidating and energy draining. Why? Including new personnel inevitably means *change*, change means discomfort. Change ranks high on the Richter scale of stress! Overcoming discomfort associated with change-induced stress is work, emotional work—work that means addressing insecurities related to self-identity and interpersonal relations. Staff members wonder—will their new partner be better than themselves, will he/she show them up, with the parents or children like them better, will he/she take over the classroom? Worse, will he/she make things harder than they already are? Directors CAN facilitate the process of integrating new staff so it limits staff stress as much as possible.

Skills for Integrating New Staff

Integrating new staff members takes commitment, determination, and patience. Building staff cohesiveness requires not only effort, but that most precious commodity... time—time for relationships to grow; for commonalities to be recognized, for attachments to form, for respect to be earned and granted, for compassion and helpfulness to overcome turf protection, self centeredness, and latent concerns of inferiority.

It is harder to integrate new staff into some programs more than others. In programs riddled with established cliques, competition for the allegiance of a new staff person can be fierce. The process of staff integration is an art because it requires a sensitive, creative touch. It is a science because it requires a director to make judicious decisions regarding delicate issues that affect staff's egos

and perceptions of their abilities. When new staff join your ranks, time for purposeful observation and reflection is required. It takes a keen eye and alert ear to identify strengths and weaknesses of new and continuing staff members. By reflecting on firsthand observations, Directors and T&Cs can match personnel strengths and weaknesses so they complement each other.

Directors need to cultivate the skills of creativity, imagination, and resourcefulness to develop strategies and techniques for team building. The ability to set the stage and then step back and let staff work out their own co-worker relationships is critical. No Director can WILL staff unity—it must be fostered and continually nurtured like any other type of social relationship.

Role of Friendships in Staff Relationships

The old adage says that work and personal life should be kept separate—that prickly baggage like emotional friendships should not be relevant, or welcomed, in the work setting. Social relationships simply “muddy up the waters” of a business-like environment. In some business circles, personal friendships are seen as a hindrance to be avoided, not an asset to be cultivated.

But child care is a labor intensive business, and after all, one of the purposes of our field is to assist in “people-making” for today's and tomorrow's society. How can we perpetuate a philosophy that disregards individual personal relationships? Friendships should not only be purposefully nurtured among children, but also among staff. We should be role models for children trying to learn social skills. Respectful and caring friendships are an integral and necessary component among a child care

staff. A cohesive staff, who consider themselves friends, is vital to successfully meeting program goals. Caring support is an outgrowth of friendships developed among staff members.

In observing many team teachers over the years, some appeared very dissimilar in teaching style and personality, and yet their classroom contributions melded seamlessly. The common ingredient in those successful “odd couple” match ups was an underlying affection for each other as human beings.

Maintaining a friendship is a strong motivator for cooperation, flexibility, and courtesy. All, of which, are valuable social skills for any business employee. In fact, Karen Miller, in her book *More to Do with Toddlers and Twos* (Telshare Publishing, 1983), states that—based on a survey she conducted—one of the primary reasons caregivers stay in child care, despite its low paying wages, is because they don't want to leave behind close relationships they have formed with co-workers. Directors, are we getting the hint? Apparently, promoting friendships can help reduce staff turnover.



Setting the Stage for Positive Employee Relationships: Specific Strategies

⇒ *Start BEFORE the Beginning*

When interviewing for new staff, include some members of the existing staff whenever possible. Seek feedback from current staff on the pros and cons of hiring each interview candidate. You want to make it clear that the ultimate decision is yours, however, their feedback will be considered in your decision making process.

There are four main reasons for including staff in the interview process. First, they might gain compassion for you. They will see for themselves that when looking for a qualified and experienced employee, “pickings” can be pretty slim out there! Secondly, you will be showing your commitment to building a staff that is unified in its approach. Thirdly, it is respectful of current staff. Extra eyes and ears never hurt when you are trying to avoid picking “a rotten apple”. Lastly, when staff help select a candidate, they are bound to be much more eager to welcome that person aboard. They will be motivated to ensure the candidate’s success as a functioning staff member. After all, they don’t want to own up to a hiring mistake any more than you do!

⇒ *Organize a Mentor System*

Include current staff in integrating new personnel into the staff by asking them to serve as a mentor (a title that recognizes knowledge and ability as well as connotes respect). Mentors can introduce the new staff member to all employees, help them locate things in their classroom or building, help introduce them to the parents and children, etc.

Mentors can bring life to program goals and philosophy. Staff orienta-

tion and handbooks cannot replace the excitement and commitment conveyed by an enthusiastic mentor. Mentors are in a position to refer new employees to current staff members with special skills in such areas as conducting smooth transitions, developing creative learning centers, or planning activity-based circle times. In this way, mentors can specifically point out role models for new employees. They can also be “safe havens” for new employees with lots of questions. It is much easier to risk asking questions in front of one person than to risk it in front of a large staff meeting. New employees may also be shy about asking questions of a direct supervisor who will ultimately evaluate them at the end of their probationary period. In the long run, it is better to get their questions answered, whether it be by you or a mentor. An employee with information gaps can unintentionally cause communication or procedural problems for your program, which hinders integration as well as overall staff morale.

⇒ *Involve Your Parent Advisory Board*

Encourage board members to visit new staff members’ classrooms to introduce themselves. Make sure names of new staff are announced at board meetings and parent events. Having the Chair Person send a personal note of welcome can go a long way in encouraging a sense of belonging.

⇒ *Organize Staff Parties*

Whether you hold it at your home or have it catered in a local park pavilion, parties are great ice breakers! When people laugh together, friendship is not far behind! And, by all means, always have food at the party. I’ve never failed to see chocolate desserts cause unbridled excitement! If they have nothing else in common, a love of chocolate can begin to break the ice among new and existing staff. Full blown parties aren’t necessary, either. Simple get-togethers at a local restaurant are also helpful during the “getting to know you” stage.

⇒ *Celebrate Work Anniversaries*

Surprise a new staff member on her three month anniversary with your program. Present him/her a small gift or card during snack time or hide it in an unlikely place so he/she will find it unexpectedly. Honoring a work anniversary with an item that has PERSONAL meaning to the staff member is a small but very effective way to show staff you are glad they are aboard.

⇒ *Establish Center Committees*

As soon as an employee is hired, assign him/her (or ask him/her to volunteer) to serve on a committee. It may be a committee to select multicultural toys or plan a training workshop. The process of working together with others informally on a committee gives staff members a chance to know each other away from the classroom. When committee members delegate tasks and work on goals, a sense of commitment, cooperation, and pride in teamwork is developed. Professional friendships may also begin to develop.

⇒ *Send a Group to a Conference*

Even a day trip gives staff a chance to know each other better. Driving in the car, eating lunch, browsing through an exhibit hall, grabbing a cool drink in the hotel restaurant are the settings in which individuals feel most comfortable revealing themselves to others.

⇒ *A ‘Who Is It?’ Scavenger Hunt*

Provide a list of questions geared to help new staff members meet veteran staff members. Wisely selected questions can help new staff gather information on veteran staff’s unique talents or interesting personal history. Give the staff person a month to find out all of the answers. By the end of the month, he/she should have met plenty of new people and not feel like an outsider.

Asking Open-Ended Questions

Asking questions like, “What color is that block?” evokes a one-word answer. But an open-ended question, “Tell me about the blocks you are using,” encourages a child to describe the blocks or explain what he/she is doing. There is no right or wrong answer here.

An answer to an open-ended question gives us a window into what the child is thinking and feeling. And the response is sometimes wonderfully creative. In explaining or describing, children also use language more fully.

In a developmentally appropriate program, care providers should try to think of good questions to ask children. Some examples of open-ended questions are:

- Tell me about your picture.
- What else can you do with the play dough?
- What could you use to make the tower stand up?
- What do you think would happen if...?
- Is there another way to...?



It is difficult to change the closed-end question habit. But when we ask open-ended questions, children reap great benefits as they think through their responses to express what they want to say. And with their answers, we find out more about what they think, feel and understand.

Process vs. Product

As adults, we are concerned with the outcomes or the product of our efforts. We want the report to look nice, the cookies to taste great, or the hedges to be perfectly straight. We participate in few activities just for the fun of doing them.

In part this is because we are not still learning how to do most of these activities. But do you remember when you learned how to play tennis or golf or use a computer program? In the beginning you needed to do a certain amount of “messing around” - exploring what would happen if you did this or that.

That is the way it is with young children. Children are learning new things all the time, and they need the freedom to try things out without worrying about the product.

Luckily, young children tend to be more involved with the process or the doing than they are with the end product or results. That is why children may draw all afternoon yet still not be able to tell you what he/she drew. And why one child can pour rice back and forth between pitchers all day long, and another will string and unstring beads every day for a week.

It is hard for us adults to look beyond the product of an activity and see what the child is learning from the process. Perhaps he/she is learning coordination or beginning writing skills or making discoveries about triangles or gravity. He/she is certainly finding out that doing for one's self is very satisfying—and that builds confidence.

Be patient. Allow the children the time to grow and learn through the various processes that are part of the task. Enjoy watching his or her involvement. Later, we all can be proud of the product.

Make Your Own Storybooks

Children love stories and love making things, so take advantage of this terrific combination and make some books with the children in your classroom. Preschool children are ready to help write and illustrate stories from their own experiences or imagination.

Here's an idea:



1. Write down a story as a child tells it. Be sure to write the child's words, not yours, and repeat the words as you write. This process helps a child recognize that print is “talk” written down (a pre-requisite for reading).
2. Place an appropriate number of words at the top of separate pages and reread the story with the child.
3. Invite the child to illustrate each page and, if he/she wishes, to create a cover, title page, and dedication.
4. Arrange pages in order and place in a notebook or create a binder.
5. Encourage the child to “read” this new book to you.

This same process can be used with photographs that describe a trip to the zoo, a vacation, or a visit from Grandma.

These unique books make wonderful gifts. You might want to photocopy them (color photocopies are great) and give them to several members of the family or close friends.

Remember, whatever the topic, we adults act only as the scribes for the child's words and as assistants in putting the book together. The child should make all the decision about the content and creation of their storybooks.

Center Directors Share Staff Motivation Success Stories

Staff Photo Board

Every year, photographs of all staff members are proudly displayed on a large bulletin board. Each month the theme of the bulletin board is changed. For example, in September the theme is apples—"Excellent to the Core." In October the theme is pumpkins—"You're the Pumpkin in My Patch." The staff photos remain up all year. This display is a great motivator for staff members.



Positive Wallpapering

At the end of the fiscal year, the director asked parents for feedback on the most beneficial aspects of the program, as well as on areas needing improvement. The night before the beginning of the new fiscal school year, she compiled parents' quotes of praise, enlarged them, and "wallpapered" the staff lounge with them in a display entitled, "Positive Thoughts About (center's name)." When caregivers walked in the next morning, they saw all around them parents' descriptions about how they had touched children's lives.

Secret Observers

Once a month, each staff member picks a name of a staff member from a grab bag. During the month, the staff member observes the person whose name they drew. Then at the monthly staff meeting, staff members share one exceptional thing they observed. This procedure was developed to encourage teamwork and build staff morale.

Dinner for Staff

Parents rejuvenated staff by having a staff appreciation potluck dinner event. Parents worked on a way to let staff know they were important people—gifts, artwork, letters. At the center, the children made blue ribbons for the staff and in circle time brainstormed winning categories such as prettiest, funniest, friendliest. All staff received original hand painted water color invitations made by the children. At the dinner, staff were presented with their awards and gifts, along with a personalized copy of this anonymous poem:

One hundred years from now, it will not matter

what kind of car I drove,

what kind of house I lived in,

how much money I had in my bank account

nor what my clothes looked like.

But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child.

Everyone went home from the dinner with lots of "warm fuzzies".

The Heart Award



A special possession is the "Heart of (name of center)." At the monthly staff meeting, the director awards a stuffed satin heart decorated with lace to a staff member for a special contribution that person made to the program (such as a creative idea they implemented in their classroom). The staff can nominate a fellow employee or the director can choose someone. The heart hangs in the award winner's classroom for the month.

Walk a Mile in MY Shoes

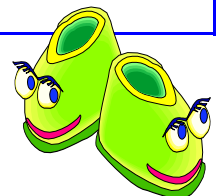
"Walk a Mile in My Shoes Day" allows members of the administrative staff to substitute for the caregiving staff from 1-3 PM. This allows the caregivers to go out for a long lunch together. Positive feedback from the staff makes the effort worthwhile and promotes teambuilding among the care providers.

Achievements Display

When center staff take time off from their busy schedules to attend workshops, their photos and a copy of the workshop certificates are mounted and displayed in the reception area for staff, parents, and children to see.

Staff Trivia

Each member secretly tells director the answer to a trivia question, such as "My favorite TV show" or "A talent I have that others aren't aware of". Each staff member then receives a sheet listing all staff members on one side with the scrambled answers on the other side and then attempts to match people with their answers. The person making the most correct matches wins some fast food coupons, or other small prize, but all staff have fun getting to know each other better.



Assessing Staff Problems: Key to Effective Staff Development by John M. Johnston

To be most effective, staff development activities must have a clearly established goal, must be meaningful for those involved, and must be actively valued by administrators. Rather than taking advantage of whatever is available, staff development efforts must be thoughtfully planned in relation to the operation and goals of the center. We know that, like the child with whom they work, care givers are unique individuals. If staff development is to be a meaningful process, then new ways to individualize staff development efforts must be explored.

Administrators and staff development planners must realize that if employees are expected to take staff development activities seriously, so must the administration. Staff development is too important to expect that the often low paid, marginally trained and motivated caregivers will take part in them in their spare time. Real improvement in staff development will require careful planning to insure meaningful, personalized activities for which care providers receive release time or appropriate compensation.

A Problems Based Approach

One new approach to providing meaningful, individualized staff development activities with clear objectives and goals is based on identifying the day-to-day problems which staff experience as they go about their work. After two decades of research and practice, Cruickshank (1980) maintains that if you can identify what caregivers feel their problems are, you have accomplished the first step in helping them manage or solve those problems.

Armed with this important understanding of how staff view their work-related problems, you will be better able to design staff development activities which address these problems.

Knowledge of how staff members view their own work-related problems can be a valuable asset for the Training and Curriculum Specialist. If staff members realize that they are working toward solution of their problems, they are more likely to buy into the staff development process. Staff motivation to be actively involved in professional development efforts will be enhanced if they have meaningful input into the planning process. If they realize that the results of staff development activities may lead to reducing or eliminating frequent or bothersome problems, they will be less likely to look upon staff development activities as an intrusion into their already crowded job responsibilities.

There are two basic approaches to identifying staff problems: inferred problems and expressed problems.

Inferred Problem Approach: In the inferred problems approach, supervisors or trainers infer from their own perceptions, knowledge, or experience what problems staff are experiencing. One basic drawback to this approach is that it assumes that administrators understand how staff members perceive and experience their unique job requirements. Perhaps more seriously, the inferred needs approach may subtly communicate to staff that administrators lack confidence in staff members' ability to know what their own problems are.

Expressed Problems Approach: In contrast, the expressed needs approach to identifying staff problems assumes that staff members can be one reliable source of information about how they themselves view the difficulties they face in performing their assigned work responsibilities. Knowledge of how staff members view their own abilities and short-comings is an important key to successful staff development planning.

Identifying Staff Problems

Recent research on the problems of preschool and child care teachers is based on the psychological definition that a problem is an expression of an unmet need or an unfulfilled goal (Cruickshank). In other words, if we want something and cannot have it, then we have a problem. Given this definition, then, within each problem a staff member describes is at least one unmet need or goal—something the staff member wants.

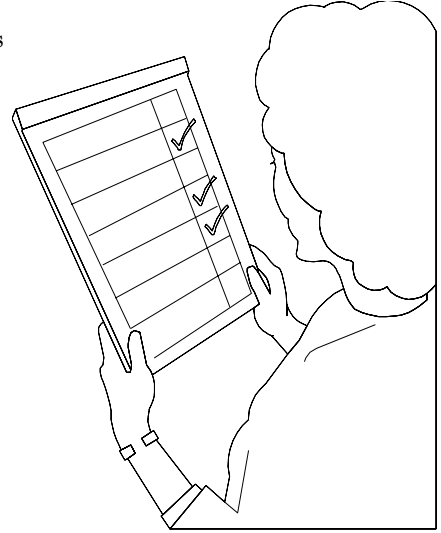
Problem descriptions were collected from caregivers over a period of two years from all over the country. These descriptions were then synthesized into problem statements by a jury of child care teachers and directors who were responsible for staff development training. After synthesizing and eliminating duplicates, the remaining 102 problem statements were used to develop the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist (PTPC). This checklist was then used by 291 prekindergarten and child care teachers from 23 states.

Analysis of the checklist responses allowed us to determine which problems were (a) frequently occurring, (b) bothersome, (c) both frequent and bothersome, and (d) neither frequent nor bothersome. It also allowed us to revise the PTPC to include only the most important teacher problems.

Using the Checklist

The revised Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist (PTPC) contains 60 items, including all problems which were found to be significantly frequent, significantly bothersome, or both frequent and bothersome. The attached PTPC may be duplicated and used to identify areas for staff development and planning.

Have your staff rate the extent to which each statement represents a problem they experience. Using a scale of 1 to 5, write 1 if the statement is not a problem, 2 if it is a small problem, and so on up to 5 if the statement represents a serious problem. Staff may then go back and make a list of all the problems they rated 5 (serious problem). Then have them make a second list of those problems they rated 4 (difficult problem). These two lists form the basis for a personalized improvement program for that staff member. In individual supervisory conferences, the administrator and staff member may cooperatively agree on resources and strategies for reducing or eliminating these problems.



The PTPC may also be used as a basis for staff development plans for the whole center. Use a blank PTPC as a master sheet and record each person's rating for each item. Next, compute the average score for each item. Then items with the highest average score represent problems of importance to the staff as a whole. In all likelihood, each care provider will have some problems which are not shared by others. Several teachers may share the same problem; these can form the basis for a small group staff development activity. Other problems will be shared by most staff members and will form the basis for center-wide training activities.

Use of the PTPC as an aid to identifying needed areas for staff development will provide staff members with a mechanism for meaningful input into the planning process. Since each problem on the PTPC, and hence the problems and problem areas identified by using the PTPC, represents care providers' perceptions of their own work-related problems, there is greater likelihood that staff will be motivated to engage in staff development efforts based on these problems. Finally, since the problems identified represent goals already held by the staff themselves, the chance that meaningful professional development will take place will be increased.

A copy of the Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist is located on the following pages.



References:

Cruikshank, Donald R. and associates. *Teaching in Tough*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.

Johnston, John M. "The Perceived Problems of Prekindergarten Teachers." Milwaukee, WI: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 231 525), 1983.

Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist

Prepared by John M. Johnston

Instructions: Preface each problem statement with the phrase, "I have a problem..."

- _____ 1. Getting children to do what I ask them to do.
 - _____ 2. Controlling the noise or energy level in the room.
 - _____ 3. Understanding the reason for children's problem behavior.
 - _____ 4. Getting parents to supply accurate, up-to-date information for our files.
 - _____ 5. Getting children to share or take turns.
 - _____ 6. Providing for communication among staff.
 - _____ 7. Getting parent cooperation in solving their children's preschool/center-related problems.
 - _____ 8. Orienting new staff to all aspects of the program and their job.
 - _____ 9. Getting parents to drop off or pick up their children on time.
 - _____ 10. Knowing how to handle children's aggressive behavior.
 - _____ 11. Dealing with a child who cries or whines frequently.
 - _____ 12. Promoting effective mutual communication between home and center.
 - _____ 13. Getting staff to follow through on assigned responsibilities.
 - _____ 14. Getting parents to keep their children home with they are sick.
 - _____ 15. Getting children to clean up.
 - _____ 16. Motivating myself to be involved in outside professional activities.
 - _____ 17. Dealing with parents who say their child is toilet trained when he/she is not.
 - _____ 18. Providing adequate staff to meet all program needs.
 - _____ 19. Knowing how to help the special or atypical child.
 - _____ 20. Spending personal time doing necessary classroom tasks or administrative tasks.
 - _____ 21. Contending with interruptions while I am working.
 - _____ 22. Meeting the required staff-child ratios at all times during the day.
 - _____ 23. Getting children to learn and follow room rules and routines.
 - _____ 24. Finding time away from children for planning and preparation.
 - _____ 25. Getting children to use words and not hit others when they are angry.
 - _____ 26. Getting parents to follow policies on enrollment or fee payments.
 - _____ 27. Keeping children's attention during group time.
 - _____ 28. Getting parent cooperation with toilet training.
 - _____ 29. Getting children to sleep or rest quietly without disturbing others at nap time.
 - _____ 30. Working with an ineffective supervisor.
 - _____ 31. Getting parents to provide appropriate clothing from home.
 - _____ 32. Finding effective substitute staff.
 - _____ 33. Feeling positive toward a child who frequently misbehaves.
 - _____ 34. Getting my supervisor to respect my professional judgment.
 - _____ 35. Being able to stay home when I am sick.
 - _____ 36. Keeping one child's problem behavior from affecting other children.
 - _____ 37. Finding workshops that are appropriate to my level of skill and knowledge.
 - _____ 38. Meeting an individual child's needs without neglecting the group.
 - _____ 39. Getting children who are toilet trained not to wet their pants.
 - _____ 40. Helping parents understand and deal appropriately with their child's behavior.
 - _____ 41. Getting staff to model appropriate behavior for children.
-

Checklist continued

- _____ 42. Getting staff to work in a cooperative fashion.
- _____ 43. Helping parents of atypical children recognize and adjust to their child's needs.
- _____ 44. Getting parents to come to scheduled events or conferences.
- _____ 46. Getting my supervisor to include me in the decision making process for my classroom.
- _____ 47. Knowing how to counteract a child's negative home environment.
- _____ 48. Meeting the needs of the children when the room is short staffed.
- _____ 49. Working with equipment or facilities which are in poor condition.
- _____ 50. Getting all children to participate in group activities.
- _____ 51. Knowing if parents are abusing or neglecting their children.
- _____ 52. Finding time for cleaning and other non-teaching tasks.
- _____ 53. Involving the passive child in activities.
- _____ 54. Getting staff to recognize and act on children's needs.
- _____ 55. Dealing with unfair criticism from my supervisor.
- _____ 56. Meeting the needs of all children in a multi-age group.
- _____ 57. Giving adequate attention to the special or atypical child without neglecting other children.
- _____ 58. Getting staff to understand and deal appropriately with young children's behavior.
- _____ 59. Dressing and undressing children for cold weather outdoor play.
- _____ 60. Understanding the public attitude that day care or preschools are just babysitting.

Safety Tips for Sleeping Babies

If your baby is under 12 months old, you can help prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), suffocation, and strangulation by following these three tips:

1. Place your baby to sleep on his or her back.
2. Remove all soft bedding from the crib.
3. Put your baby to sleep in a safe crib.

Why follow these tips?

1. Babies who sleep on their backs have a much lower risk of dying from SIDS and suffocation. African American babies die from SIDS at more than twice the rate of other babies.
2. A baby can suffocate from soft bedding in a crib. Be sure to remove all pillows, quilts, comforters, and sheepskins from your crib.
3. A safe crib is the best place for your baby to sleep. Make sure your crib has:
 - No missing or broken hardware and slats no more than 2 3/8" apart.
 - No corner posts over 1/16" high.
 - No cutout designs in the headboard or foot board.
 - A firm, tight fitting mattress.
 - A safety certification seal (on new cribs)



PREVENTIVE MEDICINE ISSUES

1. Many of you have asked questions about Preventive Medicine procedures, so I (Kathleen Jennings) wrote our POC at Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) and received the following answers:

a. NPC QUESTION: Can someone inform all Preventive Medicine Inspectors of the OPNAV requirement to conduct initial and annual home inspections for CDH both on and off-base? Is this something that can be added to the HM course so that all Preventive Medicine offices are consistently meeting reference (a) requirements?

NEHC RESPONSE: NEHC can and will notify (through direct e-mail) all EHOs who, in turn, can notify their PMTs, to abide by OPNAV 1700.9D, Section 23.8 to inspect home day cares on inception, annually, and when complaints are received. This message will also be sent to PMT School. Additionally, a "Forum Note" will be posted on the NEHC Preventive Medicine Website clarifying this requirement.

b. NPC QUESTION: Preventive Medicine technicians on some commands are still insisting that CDC caregivers complete the entire six-hour food handler's course. Can you assist us by informing all Preventive Medicine offices that CDC caregivers and home care providers do not have to complete the six-hour food handler's course? As we move into our Most Efficient Organizations in accordance with the Functionality Assessments (formally CA Study) our CDC staffing will meet the minimum standards in reference (a) and it will become harder to schedule caregivers away from the centers for a six-hour course. We continue to require cooks, food service workers, and substitute food service workers to complete the six-hour course. However, can we discontinue requiring the long course for caregivers?

NEHC RESPONSE: NEHC will assist in notifying PMTs through e-mail, the PM Forum, and PMT School, that 6 hours of Food Service Training for CDC/CDH care providers is not required. However, OPNAV 17009D. requires all CDC/CDH care providers to be aware of and follow basic sanitary food service, preparation and handling in accordance with NAVMED P-5010-1 (e.g., many CDCs use "Healthy Kids Keep Everybody Healthy"). NEHC strongly recommends that all CDC/CDH care providers take the 4 hours Food Handler/Employee's Course, to satisfy this requirement. This training does not have to be done in one session but can be broken down into smaller time blocks. NEHC also recommends that a Supervisor from each CDC or Person in Charge (PIC) of each CDC's Food Preparation Area, attend the 18-hours Supervisor/Manager's Food Sanitation Course. The Supervisor or the PIC can then in turn provide the requisite 4-hours of food handling training to CDC/CDH care providers.

2. We agree with the recommendation for the T&C Specialist and CDH Director/Monitor take this 18 hour course so they can both train CDC caregivers and CDH providers. However, I have highlighted "recommends" because we know that some small commands cannot always accomplish this training. Other commands have high staff turnover with T&Cs, CDH staff, etc. Therefore, for now, many of you will continue to meet the requirement for a minimum two hour orientation course using "Healthy Kids Keep Everybody Healthy". We'd like your feedback on the possibility of including the four hour course during the first six months of CDC/SAC/CDH, or the possibility of CDC/SAC/CDH care providers attending the four hour course prior to caring for children. If we add this requirement to the revision of the OPNAVINST 1700.9D, give us your input on suggested phrasing.

3. We have a new point of contact at NEHC who is looking forward to working with us and helping us with child/youth issues. Once I receive feedback from the field, Gwen Boyd and I can discuss it with him. If you have other questions, please forward them to me and I'll get an answer from him. We will post common questions and answers on the web pages and in Undercurrents. If you have any questions or comments I can be reached at DSN 882-6701 or 901-874-6701 or email Kathleen.Jennings@persnet.navy.mil or P659F@persnet.navy.mil

KATHLEEN O'CONNOR-JENNINGS
NAVY CHILD DEVELOPMENT HOMES

It Matters To This One

*As I walked along the seashore
This young boy greeted me.
He was tossing stranded starfish
Back to the deep blue sea.
I said, "Tell me why you bother,
Why waste your time this way.
There's a million stranded starfish
Does it matter, anyway?"*

*And he said, "It matters to this one.
It deserves a chance to grow.
It matters to this one.
I can't save them all, I know.
But it matters to this one,
I'll return it to the sea.
It matters to this one.
And it matters to me."*

*I walked into the classroom.
The teacher greeted me.
She was helping Johnny study.
He was struggling, I could see.
I said, "Tell me why you bother,
Why waste your time this way.
Johnny's only one of millions,
Does it matter anyway?"*

*And she said, "It matters to this one.
He deserves a chance to grow.
It matters to this one.
I can't save them all, I know.
But it matters to this one,
I'll help him be what he can be.
It matters to this one
And it matters to me."*



NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST HOLDS IT'S FIRST ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Bases in the outlying area of Navy Region Southwest (NAS Lemoore, NAS Fallon, NAF El Centro, NAS Point Mugu, NCBC Port Hueneme and NWC Seal Beach) held it's first annual caregiver and home care provider educational conference at Harris Ranch Conference Center near NAS Lemoore on 26 August.

The theme of the conference—GROWING TOGETHER: PLANTING SEEDS FOR SUCCESS—reflected the year of the various programs coming together as one Regional Child Care Program. All CDH Providers and CDC Staff who attended were fully funded to attend. The local Commanding Officers closed the facilities and/or reduced hours of operations to allow their early childhood professionals to travel the distance to the conference. The parents were all very supportive of the conference, wishing the participants success as they began their trip.

The conference kick-off was a Friday evening dinner at a local restaurant. The conference day began early with a continental breakfast and an emotional “keynote” address prepared by Polly Elam, Regional CDPA and Debbie Bergstrom, CDC Director, NAS Point Mugu. The presentation featured photographs of the children taken during the past year programmed to the music of Barbara Striesand, *At the Same Time*.

The conference program included breakout sessions presented by Training/Curriculum Specialist, CDC/CDH Directors, Caregivers and Providers. The closing session was a high-energy musical celebration with Steve and Greg of Youngheart Records.

The conference then moved to NAS Lemoore BOQ for an evening social and a Poster Presentation. Each CDC/CDH Program had prepared a display of their programs with curriculum ideas and hand-outs.

Following the Poster Presentation, the participants enjoyed a barbecue dinner prepared by Pam McCullough from NAS Lemoore, CDC.

The Conference concluded on Sunday morning with a continental breakfast. Feedback from the group was that it was an overwhelming success. In the words of one CDH Provider, “We really are a team. You couldn't tell Providers from Caregivers and you could tell who came from what Base.”



Pictures from the Conference



GREG & STEVE



DANCING WITH GREG & STEVE



POSTER PRESENTATION



POSTER PRESENTATION



GROUP PHOTO

TECHNIQUES FOR DISCIPLING YOUR CHILD (verses punishing your child)

Distract
Ignore inappropriate behavior
Structure the environment
Control the situation, not the child
Involve the child through choices and consequences
Plan time with individual child
Let go
Increase your consistency
Notice and acknowledge positive behavior
Exclude the child from the activity

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES...

- express the rules of social living
- are related to the misbehavior
- separate the deed from the doer
- are concerned with what will happen now, not with past behavior
- are given in a friendly way
- permit choices

Famous Quotes on Education

Good teachers cost a lot, but
poor teachers cost a lot more.
ANONYMOUS

The teacher is one who makes two
ideas grow when there was only
one before.
ELBERT HUBBARD

I touch the future, I teach.
CHRISTA McAULIFFE

Other people can't make you see
with their eyes. At best they can
only encourage you to use your own.
ALDOUS LEONARD HUXLEY

A teacher affects eternity; he
can never tell where his influ-
ence stops.
HENRY BROOKS ADAMS

Everyone who remembers his own educa-
tional experience remembers teachers, not
methods and techniques. The teacher is the
kingpin of the educational situation.
SIDNEY HOOK



MAINTAINING PROPER PLAYGROUND SURFACING: VITAL TO KEEPING KIDS SAFE

The National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) are encouraging playground officials to make sure the appropriate surface is under and around equipment. The areas under and around playground equipment where children can fall are very important and should include a properly cushioned surface, NPPS officials said. The total space is dependent on the type of equipment at the playground, but in general, the surface should extend a minimum of 6-feet in all directions from the edge of stationary playground equipment.

For slides higher than 4-feet, adults should take the entrance height of the slide and add 4-feet to determine the distance that the surfacing should extend from the end of the slide. The fall zone at the exit of the slide should extend a minimum of 6-feet from the end of the slide for slides 4-feet or less in height.

Having proper surfacing around playground equipment is vital. Improper surfacing is the leading cause of playground injuries, accounting for more than 70 percent of incidents involving children falling on playgrounds.

Hard surfaces such as asphalt, blacktop, concrete, grass, packed dirt, or rocks are not acceptable, experts said. A fall on to one of these surfaces could be life threatening.

Acceptable alternatives include hardwood fiber/mulch, pea gravel, and sand. Other options include rubber tiles, mats or poured surfaces. Surfaces should be maintained to a depth proportionate to the height of the equipment, but a 12-inch dept is a good guideline for equipment up to 8-feet in height.

A manufacturer should provide test results to indicate appropriate depth of their material proportionate to the height of the equipment.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) noted that the surface under and around playground equipment could be a major factor in determining the injury-causing potential of a fall. It is self evident that a fall on to a shock-absorbing surface is less likely to cause a serious injury than a fall on to a hard surface.

Head impact injuries from a fall have the potential for being life threatening. If a surface has the ability to absorb shock from a fall, the severity of the injury may be reduced.

Concurring with the NPPS, CPSC officials noted that asphalt or concrete is unsuitable for use under or around playground equipment at any height unless they are required as a base for a shock absorbing materials such as a rubber mat.

Surface such as soils and hard packed dirt are also not recommended because their shock absorbing properties can vary considerably depending on climatic conditions such as moisture and temperature. Similarly, grass and turf are not recommended because their effectiveness in absorbing shock during a fall can be reduced considerably due to wear and environmental conditions.

Acceptable Materials

CPSC officials noted that acceptable playground surfacing materials are available in two basic types, unitary or loose-fill.

Unitary materials are generally rubber mats or a combination of rubber like materials held in place by a binder that may be poured in place at the playground site and cured to form a unitary shock absorbing surface. Unitary materials are available from a number of different manufactures, many of whom have a range of materials with differing shock absorbing properties.

Those wishing to install a unitary material as a playground surface should request test data from the manufacturer, which should identify the critical height of the desired material. In addition, site requirements should be obtained from the manufacturer, as some unitary materials require installation over a hard surface while for others this is not required.

Loose-fit materials can also have acceptable shock absorbing properties when installed at a sufficient dept. These materials include, but are not confined to, sand, gravel, and shredded wood products. Loose-fit materials should not be installed over hard surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.

GOVERNMENT RECREATION & FITNESS—JUNE 2000

CRITICAL HEIGHTS (IN FEET) OF TESTED MATERIALS

Materials	Uncompressed Dept		Compressed Dept	
	6-Inch	9-Inch	12-Inch	9-Inch
Wood Mulch	7	10	11	10
Double Shredded Bark Mulch	6	10	11	7
Uniformed Wood Chips	6	7	>12	6
Fine Sand	5	5	9	5
Coarse Sand	5	5	6	4
Fine Gravel	6	7	10	6
Medium Gravel	5	5	6	5

Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission



Matching Learning Styles to Staff Training

Included in the new Training and Curriculum Specialist Guidebook is a chapter on Adult Learning. In that chapter you will find research demonstrates teachers learn best when they can rely on their primary learning mode. Before the brain processes information, it must first receive data from its sensory channels—visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. For each individual, there is a dominant and preferred sensory channel that defines a personal learning style. Brain research suggests that when caregiver training activities are presented in the care provider's primary learning style, the individual will learn faster, more easily, and with less fatigue or stress.

A number of indicators can be used to determine whether a person is a visual, auditory, or tactile/kinesthetic learner. One is the direction of unconscious eye movements in response to questions. When asked to recall information, visual learners will move their eyes up and to the right or straight ahead. When asked to imagine or construct a mental picture, visual learners will move their eyes up and to the left or straight ahead. Auditory learners move their eyes from side to side when recalling or constructing a mental picture. Tactile learners move their eyes rapidly around then glance downward in the direction of their dominant hand.

Voice clues are another indication of a person's preferred channel. Visual learners frequently talk with a high pitched voice and in rapid bursts. By contrast, auditory learners have evenly modulated and melodious voices. They intuitively listen to their own voices as they speak. Tactile learners tend to have lower voices, are less articulate, and speak in slow and halting cadence.

A fascinating dimension of each learning style is its linguistic content. Visual learners speak in visual terms. Statements such as "It isn't clear to me" or "I see your point" are common expressions. Auditory learners express themselves in words that signal reliance on auditory processing—for example, "Your idea sounds good to me" or "Hear me out." Tactile/kinesthetic learners communicate ideas through sensory tactile images, including, "I can't handle this" and "How do you feel about my idea?"

Observing the behavior of care providers/teachers attending oral presentations can also reveal much about their personal learning styles. Visual learners often position themselves at the front of a group. Their note taking tends to be very organized, since they rely on visual pictures to encode and recall.

Auditory learners usually sit in the middle. As they listen to the speaker, they simultaneously conduct an internal dialogue. Frequently, auditory learners glance downward while they listen to concentrate and comprehend meaning. Taking copious notes can be burdensome for auditory learners. They prefer to listen to information in order to think about it.

Kinesthetic learners are most likely to sit at the back where they have room to stretch out, making themselves physically comfortable. Tactile learners have difficulty sitting for long periods of time and may need to move about to stay focused.

In preparing for your training efforts, it would be helpful to know more about the primary learning styles of those you will be teaching. You can do this by observing your care providers in action. You can also use the simple questionnaire provided on the following page to assess their personal learning styles.

HOW DO YOU LEARN?

For each item below, check the response that most closely describes your typical behavior.

1. In a meeting, I...
 - A. Take lots of notes, often with lots of doodles.
 - B. Sit near the action so I can hear and participate in discussions.
 - C. Tend to get restless quickly, have the urge to move around.
2. I get the most out of workshops where the presenter...
 - A. Uses lots of audio-visual aids and handouts.
 - B. Is a good speaker.
 - C. Involves participants in exercises and hands-on experiences.
3. When someone asks me to critique something they wrote, I prefer to...
 - A. Read it quietly to myself.
 - B. Have it read to me.
 - C. Read it aloud while pacing about.
4. When I need to make a big decision, I prefer to...
 - A. Analyze my options on paper.
 - B. Sit in a comfortable place and listen to music.
 - C. Do something active like jogging, walking, or working in the yard.
5. When I studied a foreign language, I learned best when...
 - A. Reading and writing the language.
 - B. Speaking the language in the classroom.
 - C. Trying the language out in real life situations.
6. Prior to purchasing a major appliance, vehicle, or piece of equipment, I evaluate my choices by...
 - A. Reading about them.
 - B. Talking to friends and associates for their advice.
 - C. Trying the item out or seeing it in person.
7. When learning how to use a new appliance, I...
 - A. Read all the directions before trying it out.
 - B. Like to have someone tell me how to get started.
 - C. Like to set it up and try it out first.
8. When I get angry, I...
 - A. Clam up and keep it to myself.
 - B. Quickly let others know I am angry.
 - C. Clench my fists, pound the table, storm off.
9. In my spare time, I prefer to...
 - A. Watch TV, go to the movies, attend a play, or read.
 - B. Listen to the radio, play records, or attend a concert.
 - C. Engage in a physical activity.

Interpreting your answers: Total how many times you selected the A, B, and C responses. If most of your answers were A's, this would tend to indicate that you are primarily a visual learner; if most are B's, an auditory learner; and if most are C's, a kinesthetic learner.

This evaluation form was adapted from questions field tested by Patricia Scallan for **Child Care Information Exchange** as well as from the research of Walter B. Barbe and Michael N. Milone, Jr.

Lakehurst Child Care Program

The Learning Express Child Development Center included In-Service days as a significant component for the year 2000 training program. Each quarter the center is closed for a single day, which is dedicated to professional development and enhancing the quality of the program for the patrons. Myriads of events occur throughout the day to offer the staff diversity. Guest speakers are often scheduled to lecture on specific topics concerning the center. Annual required training is implemented for the entire staff to reduce time away from children during a typical operational day. The center was accredited for the third time in 2000.



For the March 17, 2000, in-service day, a mini-conference was organized. Several staff members chose to conduct workshops for coworkers on a variety of topics reflecting ages birth through five years. Brochures were produced and distributed advertising workshops for caregivers to make their selections. Conference presenters were recognized with homemade ribbons and certificates. Photos from the event were displayed in the center to reflect the joyous atmosphere of the day. I believe that this is when I truly realized the gift of these in-service days. The chance for us to join together and celebrate each other and our profession increased respect for each other and early childhood quality programs.

I want to thank our families and the Lakehurst community for recognizing and supporting the profession of early childhood education. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with you in a partnership, which benefits your children's future.

Bebette Smith, Child Development Supervisor/Training Specialist
Lakehurst, New Jersey



Managing from the Heart

Hear and understand me.

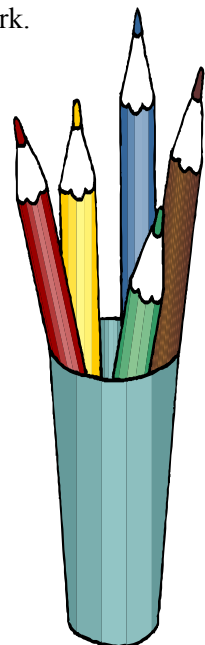
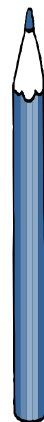
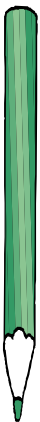
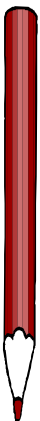
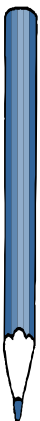
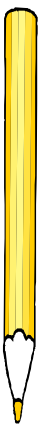
Even if you disagree, please don't make me
wrong,

Acknowledge the greatness within me.

Remember to look for my loving intentions.

Tell me the truth with compassion.





The Administrator's Dilemma

If she's friendly with the staff, she's a politician.

If she keeps to herself, she's a snob.

If she makes decisions quickly, she's arbitrary.

If she doesn't have an immediate answer, she can't make up her mind.

If she works on a day-to-day basis, she lacks foresight.

If she has long-rang plans, she's a daydreamer.

If her name appears in the newspapers, she's a publicity hound.

If no one has ever heard of her, she's a nonentity.

If she requests a large budget, she's against economy.

If she doesn't ask for money, she's a timid soul (or stark mad!)

If she tries to eliminate red tape, she has no regard for the system.

If she insists on going through the chain of command, she's a bureaucrat.

If she speaks the language of early childhood, she's a cliché expert.

If she doesn't use the jargon, she's illiterate.

If she's late for work in the morning, she's taking advantage of her position.

If she gets to the center on time, she's an eager beaver.

If the center is running smoothly, she's a dictator.

If the center is a mess, she's an inefficient administrator.

If she holds weekly staff meetings, she's in desperate need of ideas.

If she doesn't hold staff meetings, she doesn't appreciate the value of teamwork.

If she spends a lot of time with the parents, she's a back-slapper.

If she doesn't talk with them, she doesn't want their opinion.

If she goes TDY, she's on the gravy train.

If she never goes anywhere, she's not important.

If she tries to do all the work herself, she doesn't trust anybody.

If she delegates as much as possible, she's lazy.

If she tries to get additional staff, she's an empire builder.

If she doesn't want more assistance, she's a slave driver.

If she takes her work home, she's trying to impress her boss.

If she leaves the center without any homework, she has a cushy job.

If she enjoys reading this description, she's a facetious gal.

If she doesn't think this is clever, well, she's entitled to her own opinion.



PSSST!...



TRAINING AND CURRICULUM SPECIALIST CONFERENCE

"Excellence in Training—The Key to Quality"

The T&C Specialist Training Conference, "Excellence in Training—The Key to Quality", was conducted in Anaheim, CA, in conjunction with the NAEYC Annual Conference on 30 October 2001. The conference was a huge success. The one day training included three break out sessions. Mr. Jim Atkinson, of Happy Productions and better known as "Mr. Happy", conducted training on *"Plan Your Work and Work Your Plan"*, Ms. Alice Faye introduced a session on *"Wake em Up, Shake em Up: Holding Children's Attention with Interactive Stories"*, and Vickie Woods facilitated a session on *"Effective Observations"*. The day ended with Mr. Happy facilitating a group session on *"Check Up From The Neck Up"*. The participants enjoyed playing learning games that can be used to train their staff and make learning fun. The evening concluded with a dinner sponsored by Lakeshore Learning Materials. As always, Lakeshore put on an outstanding event, giving away many door prizes. Even our very own Child Development Specialist from BUPERS, Vickie Woods, won a door prize just by dancing for everyone on her chair to demonstrate the musical instruments that were being given away by Lakeshore. The pictures below speak for themselves as to the fun the participants had attending the T&C conference.



DEVELOPMENTAL DORA



Dear Dora,

The T&C says we, the caregivers, have to do regular observations on our primary children. She said we can do an observation while working with a small group of children during an activity. How in the world can she expect us to do this at the same time and is this something headquarters expects?

Primarily Need to Know

Dear Primarily Need to Know,

Your T&C is correct. Caregivers need to do regular observations of children so they can plan curriculum on the child's individual interests, skills and developmental needs. Observations provide this information. Caregivers need this information to plan accordingly. Written observations can also be shared with parents.

Observations help inform parents of exactly what their child is doing during the day and what their child is accomplishing. When conducting a small group activity or anytime you are interacting with a group of children you should be observing what they are saying and doing. Or you may focus on one particular child. Having a piece of paper or a small notebook in hand will enable you to jot down information that can be expanded later, if necessary, and placed in the child's classroom folder. The more you do observations, the better an observer you will become.

This will help you to plan appropriate activities for children and to communicate growth and development with parents. The goal of Navy Child Development Programs is quality care. Observations are necessary for planning. During an inspection, a Child Development/Youth Specialist will look for a program implementing methods that promote each child's development and will ask to see your written observations on children. Appropriate observations and planning are key factors to maintaining a quality program and care for young children.

Your T&C can provide you with one-on-one training on conducting effective observations and using the observations to plan appropriate activities for young children. You should ask your T&C about available resources, as well.

Dora

Dear Dora,

I have been in classrooms where children are encouraged to play Musical Chairs (one chair is removed after every round) and one child is made to leave the game. I often see children fighting over the last chair and one child is always left crying because they did not get a chair to continue playing the game. Are competitive games, such as Musical Chairs, appropriate for young children?

Concerned

Dear Concerned,

This is a very good question. Research demonstrates that these types of games are not appropriate for young children. Research has demonstrated that more negative behaviors are observed during competitive games and more positive behaviors are observed during cooperative games. Research also demonstrates that a teacher's warmth and nurturance does not affect children's behavior during these types of activities (Finlinson, 2000). In other research, competitive games were followed by increases in aggressive behavior and decreases in cooperative behavior (Hinitz, 1994).

However, a caregiver may choose to play traditional competitive games in an unstructured, cooperative manner by changing directions. For example, in Musical Chairs, have a chair for each child. No one "loses". Make the game fun by having children pretend to be various animals while going around the chairs or have each child find an item in the classroom that matches the color of the chair they sit in.

There are ways to make traditionally competitive games appropriate for young children by eliminating the competition.

Dora

BUPERS

Navy Personnel Command
PERS-659
MWR Division
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055-6590

Phone: (901) 874-6699

Fax: (901) 874-6823

Email: vickie.woods@persnet.navy.mil

We're on the Web!
www.mwr.navy.mil



PERS-659 **Community** **Support Branch**

We are the Community Support Branch at Navy Personnel Command, Millington. Our branch is a part of the Moral, Welfare and Recreation Division. This branch consists of several programs in which we work to help our sailors. We offer assistance in Child Development Programs, School-Age and Youth Programs, ITT, Leisure Travel, Aquatics, Outdoor Recreation and Auto Hobby. If you need assistance in any of these areas you may contact us at the number listed to the left. We also welcome you to visit us on the Web.

Our mission is to provide the highest quality service to our MWR Staff, Sailors and their families.

*I am the decisive element
in my classroom.*

*It is my personal approach
that creates the climate.*

*It is my daily mood that
makes the weather.*

*As a teacher, I possess tremendous
power to make a child's life
miserable or joyous.*

*I can be a tool of torture or
an instrument of inspiration.*

*I can humiliate or humor,
hurt or heal.*

*In all situations, it is my
response that decides whether
a crisis will be escalated or
de-escalated, a child
humanized or dehumanized.*

- Haim Ginott

